As remedies for gastritis, Dr. Wistar would generally bleed freely. Apply leeches and large blisters. Lime-water and milk, to relieve vomiting. Salivation is the dernier resort. It relieved a person in New York after twenty days constipation, and he would use it in all obstinate cases of the kind where other remedies failed. He observed that this mode was first found out in Scotland, but fell into disuse. He cautioned us, however, against frequently resorting to it, as we are not able to control the violence of salivation. A case was mentioned in which mercurial ointment was rubbed in, but was discontinued as soon as the mouth began to be sore, and yet a salivation came on which lasted six weeks, although the parts were well washed where the ointment had been rubbed.

SKETCHES OF EMINENT LIVING PHYSICIANS—NO. XXI.

PROF. CHARLES B. COVENTRY, M.D.

"*Hel.*—" * * * * Gerard de Narbon was
 My father; in what he did profess, well found.
King.—I knew him.
Hel.—The rather will I spare my praises towards him;
 Knowing him is enough."—*All's well that ends well.*

It is a curious fact, in relation to the civilization of the present age, that science and philanthropy are, as it were, divorced from religion and politics. In the middle ages, and even now in those countries where the social, religious and political conditions of the people approximate those of the middle ages, philanthropy and the sciences are in the hands of the priesthood. Medicine was practised by the same persons who officiated at the altars of religion. All plans for the amelioration of the physical condition of man, must and did originate from the cloister and the monastery. How different the present state of affairs, especially in protestant christendom. The church attends to "things spiritual," while philanthropy is not only reduced to a science, but left almost entirely to the care of the scientific professions. Medicine, ever since her separation from the paraphernalia of religion, has been the acknowledged mother of all schemes for bettering the physical and intellectual condition of man. The founder of the asylum for the insane, is now a physician; the originator of a plan and the successful conductor of the practical part of a hospital, dispensary, or *maison de santé*, is a medical man. The devoted Knight Templar of the dark ages, whose vow kept him ever ministering to the sick and the unfortunate, now takes his degree in a medical school.

The diet, dress, and domestic arrangements of a nation, that pretends to be civilized, are now moulded by the "faculty." We are sorry to add, also, that this is done for the people, as Byron said Washington defended the revolting colonies—*gratis*. The people appear to think that they have, in reference to the *true* medical man, certain "inalienable rights" which involve the time, labor and pockets of the physician. About the discrimination of *oi polloi*, in giving their money to quacks,

and their love and confidence to the faculty, we were about to speak—but *verbum sat*.

The subject of our present sketch is a true specimen of the genus "doctor" of the nineteenth century; self-sacrificing, conscientious, laborious—loving his fellow men *more than his own ease*, and endued at once with learning, morality and humility. The Coventry family, as the name imports, was of English origin. Dr. C.'s paternal grandfather, Capt. George Coventry, came to this country with the British army, during what is usually termed the "French war." On the cessation of hostilities, he returned to England, sold his commission, and purchased an estate at Finchill, near Hamilton, Scotland. The father of Prof. C. was born at this place in 1766. Losing his father while quite young, Mr. Coventry was left to select his own profession, and chose that of medicine. He studied at Hamilton, and attended the medical lectures at Glasgow in 1783-4, and at Edinburgh in 1784-5. In September, 1785, he came to this country to look after some property left him by his father. He was married in 1787, to Elizabeth, daughter of Captain Jno. Butler, of Branford, Con. He settled at Utica (then Fort Schuyler), N. Y., in 1796, where he continued to reside until the time of his death, in 1831.

He was a frequent contributor to the medical and agricultural periodicals of the day; was elected President of the State Medical Society, and in 1826 made corresponding member of the Linnæan Society of Paris. Prof. C. was the fourth son, and was born at Deerfield, near the present site of Utica, in 1801. He attended the English and classical schools at Utica, and studied medicine under the direction of his father. He followed the lectures of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Western New York, in 1822, '23, '24 and '25, and graduated in the spring of 1835. Having returned home, he commenced the practice of his profession in conjunction with his father. His *thesis*, on the subject of purulent ophthalmia, was published in the New York Medical Journal. This disease had just appeared in that section of the country for the first time, and was new to the profession. In 1828, he was appointed lecturer on Materia Medica in the Berkshire Medical School, Pittsfield, Mass.; and in the following year, the chair of Obstetrics was added to that of Materia Medica. He remained connected with this school until 1832, when, on account of the death of his father, it became necessary to resign his connection with the school, to attend to the duties of an extensive practice. In the summer of 1832, he was appointed by the Common Council of Utica to visit Albany and New York city, to make inquiries into the nature, causes and treatment of Asiatic cholera, which then raged in those places. In his report, which was published, he urged the importance of separating the well, rather than the sick, from those buildings and locations where the disease appeared. This practice has since been very generally adopted, and has tended much to lessen the mortality from the disease. At that time he expressed the opinion, which much subsequent experience has not induced him to change, that the disease was *not contagious*, in the strict sense of the term.

In the spring of 1829, he was united in marriage to the eldest daugh-

ter of Judge Butler, of Columbia county, N. Y. Eight children have been the fruits of this marriage, of whom, two sons and four daughters still survive.

In 1833, he was elected President of the Kappa Alpha Phi Society, connected with the medical college at Fairfield, N. Y. In a discourse before the Society on the subject of Tubercular Phthisis, he maintained the position that it was a disease of debility, and consequently that the treatment should be generally tonic and invigorating, in opposition to the then practice of bleeding, emetics, close rooms, &c. In Philadelphia, the same doctrine, we well remember, was eloquently taught and illustrated by the late Dr. Joseph Parrish, whose lack of literary acquirements was as great a loss to the profession, as were the same defects in Dr. Physick. The address of Dr. C. was subsequently published in a Medical Journal in New York.

On the organization of the medical department of the Geneva College, he was strongly solicited to accept an appointment in that Institution. He finally consented, on condition that Prof. Parker, now of New York city, would take the chair of Anatomy. He received the appointment of Prof. of Materia Medica and Obstetrics, and continued to lecture on the two branches until 1840, when the School was re-organized, and, at his own solicitation, the subject of Medical Jurisprudence was substituted for Materia Medica. He continues to lecture on these two subjects, in this college, to the present writing. The class of this school has reached the neighborhood of 200 pupils.

In 1845, a charter was obtained for the University of Buffalo, and the Council determined to organize the medical department. Dr. C. received the appointment to the Chair of Physiology and Medical Jurisprudence, which he has continued to fill until the present year. He has lately resigned, and accepted the title of Emeritus Professor, &c.

In 1834, Dr. C. introduced a series of resolutions before the Medical Society of the County of Oneida, which were unanimously adopted, urging upon the Legislature and the community, the necessity and duty of establishing a *State Lunatic Asylum*, as being "called for by every dictate of policy, humanity and justice;" pledging the exertions of the Society, and instructing their delegate to bring the subject before the State Society. Dr. C. has good reason to believe that his endeavors to draw the attention of the State Society and the profession to the matter, exerted no small influence in securing the erection of the State Asylum—a proud monument to the benevolence of the originators, and to the munificent contributions of the State. Dr. C. was very properly appointed one of the Board of Trustees, and of a Committee to organize the institution. The report was submitted to the Legislature, and subsequently adopted. His connection with the Institution, in the character of trustee and manager, was continued by different appointments, until two years ago, when he resigned his connection. We cannot help remarking here, that having labored so long in the establishment of this noble Institution, it appears to us that mere courtesy should have induced the managers to have elected Dr. C. to the office of Medical Superintendent. He who could design, and so successfully carry out the design from the beginning,

would have been the best man to have charge of the treatment of the insane. He had, indeed, already served in this capacity. Dr. C., however, makes no complaint himself of this matter; it is his friends that think hard of it.

In 1845, on the threatened approach of the cholera a second time, he was appointed by the faculties of the Geneva and Buffalo colleges, to visit Europe and investigate the character of the disease. His report was published in the Buffalo Medical Journal, and subsequently in the form of a volume.

In 1840, he delivered, as President of the Oneida Medical Society, an address, which was afterwards published in the Buffalo Medical Journal. Another on "Stomatitis Materna," with numerous essays in the Journal of Insanity, and other Medical Journals, introductory and valedictory in the schools in which he teaches, are, with some very good biographical sketches, especially one of Dr. Brigham, among his literary contributions to our science.

A life thus spent in honorable toil is its own reward; and such examples cannot too frequently be held up to the neophyte in medicine for his imitation and emulation.

CATO.

VENDERS OF NOSTRUMS AND PATENT MEDICINES.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—I am much pleased with some of the remarks in your number for the 10th inst., in regard to the firm of Pond & Morse, druggists of Rutland, in this State. You remark truly, that the "profession of druggist and apothecary embraced the sale of *every* and *any* kind of villainous mixture that a speculator chose to represent as a specific article for some physical affliction." To all this I would cordially agree, and also add, that many, of the country at least, are not content with selling these "villainous mixtures," when they are called for, but will endorse with apparent honesty and sincerity *their* knowledge of the truth of certificates and recommendations, which they *must* know to be false and unfounded.

For myself, I am free to acknowledge that I can no more excuse or exonerate the man who sells poisons or injurious mixtures to the sick and the suffering, at the risk of increasing pain, prolonging sickness, and causing death, under the name of "*balsams*" or "*syrups*," than I could if these same hurtful articles were sold without the disguise of a name, or the imposition of a recommendation. I do not believe that *old use* and *custom* will much longer answer as an excuse for the business of nostrum-vending, or that those who engage in it can say that "they cannot reason upon the probable effect of the sale of every article of traffic under the daily pressure of their complex business." It is true that many *do* have, or *pretend* to have, some of everything that their customers call for, be it *sarsaparilla* made of *molasses* and *corrosive sublimate*, "*bears' grease* from Cincinnati hogs," or *oil of Cedar* as a *monthly regulator* for unfortunate females; yet for one, I do not feel like justifying or ex-